

## Stage Makeup Basics

Stage makeup has several purposes. First, it helps to establish a character by adding features such as age or a crooked nose. It also helps to define the actors' features so that the audience can see them and make out even minor facial expressions. Stage makeup can be corrective, making the tone of the skin even. For the most part, only a basic knowledge of makeup application is needed. Beyond the basics, books can do little to convey what a good class and plenty of hands-on experience can teach.

Most students use the stage makeup provided by their school or they use the less-expensive street makeup. Theatrical makeup is more expensive, but the coverage is better and it is designed specifically for the stage. Regardless, each student should start by providing some of his own supplies.

Because your kit must move from home to stage and back again, it is important that it is mobile. Tackle boxes make great kits. They are sturdy, they have a convenient handle, and they have several compartments. Below are some items found in typical student makeup kits:

### Various Shades of:

- Foundation
- Lip Color
- Mascara
- Eye Color
- Cream Liners
- Powder
- Cheek Color
- Pencil Liners

### An Assortment of:

- Makeup Brushes
- Powder Puffs
- Hair Bands or Clips (even for short hair)
- Makeup Sponges
- A Smock for Protecting Clothes

### For Clean-Up:

- Cleanser
- Tissue
- Baby wipes are great for removing makeup quickly!
- Toner
- Washcloth
- Cotton Balls

### Other Items:

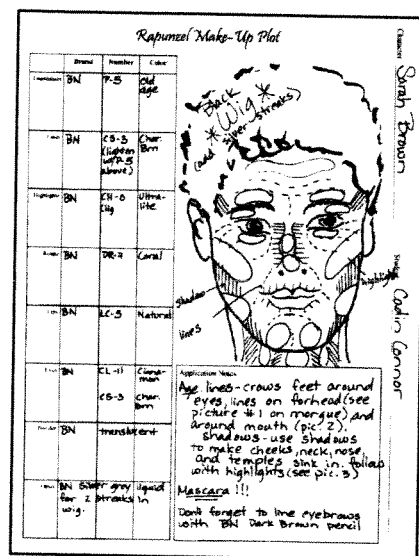
- Razor
- Hair Spray
- Deodorant
- Shave Cream
- Moisturizer
- Mirror
- Hairbrush and Comb
- Nail Polish Remover

Look at the makeup plot on page 207. If you are designing your own makeup, use this to record the colors you are using. This will save a great deal of time and worry during the moments before the show, especially if you are sharing the class kit. You can also record how and where to apply the makeup by drawing lines onto the face or by actually applying the makeup onto the diagram. This is messy, but for those with a difficult application, this may help you remember what to do from night to night. Or you may want to simply diagram the makeup by drawing the application area and writing the color next to it. A sample has been done for you on page 206.

### Stage makeup do's and don't's

- **Learn to apply your own makeup, and remember to clean up after yourself.**
- **Avoid sharing makeup when possible, and never share mascara or eye liner.**
- **Throw away outdated items and do not use makeup that causes severe skin reactions.**
- **Record the makeup you use, and be ready to make changes to your application. What looks great in the dressing room may not look right under the stage lights.**

If you will have a makeup crew, the members of the team will diagram your makeup for their own use, and before each show, they will use it to gather what they need for each actor. The plots are usually taped to the mirror at the actors' stations so that the crew can quickly and easily refer to them as they make their rounds.



## Applying Stage Makeup

Before you get started, use your plot to record any information about your makeup application provided either by the script or in the lines. Research unusual requirements like those needed for aged or heavy characters. Keep pictures from magazines (called a **makeup morgue**) with your plot. You can refer to these if you get in a bind.

Learn to apply your own makeup long before you must do it with frayed nerves. You will get practice, see how your skin reacts to the makeup, and take inventory of your kit to make last minute purchases.

Always start with a clean face. Then apply **foundation** using a clean sponge. You may have to custom mix your colors to get the right one for your skin tone. You will know when you're done correctly when the face and neck are covered thoroughly and the excess makeup is blended. There should be no streaking or evidence of makeup lines means the coverage is probably too heavy. If you need to remove some of the excess foundation. Cover the lips, and up into the hairline. Do not cover your eyebrows.

Next, you will want to focus on your **shadows** and **highlights**. For example, an average actor who must play a thin, gaunt man should use a color several shades darker than his skin to give his cheeks, temples, and eyes a sunken look. He can use a cream several shades lighter than his skin to highlight the bone structure so that the bridge of his nose, cheeks, chin, jaw, and forehead appear bony and severe.

If your character has age lines or other features such as scars, you will apply these next. It is recommended that you get used to doing this with a brush and a cream makeup rather than a pencil. While some consider a pencil easier to control, the waxy makeup is actually harder to spread, and getting the definition is much more difficult. Using a cream and a brush will allow you to have total control over the thickness, the texture, the blending, and the shape of the lines.

Next, you will want to define your features. A good rule of thumb for most is to showcase your existing features without making them appear fake. Use shadow on your eyes and blush on your cheeks, and line your brows, eyes, and lips. Then use loose powder on your face to set the creams. The best way to do this is with a large soft brush and very little powder. Apply powder everywhere you used a cream makeup, then brush off any excess. Some artists mist the powder with a very light spritz of mineral water which sets it even more. Check your blush to make sure the powder did not conceal it. Now apply any non-powdered makeup such as mascara, lip gloss, and some eyeliners.